

Tweedmatters

News from the Tweed Forum

Eddleston Water Project receives Gold Standard at UK River Prize awards



Tweed Forum Trustee Prof. Chris Spray (second from left) and staff members Luke Comins (centre) and Hamish Robertson (right) with colleagues from CBEC Eco-Engineering and JBA Consulting

In April this year, Tweed Forum was delighted to receive a Gold Standard Award for our UNESCO-recognised Eddleston Water river restoration and natural flood management project. Joining our fellow finalists at the UK River Prize awards ceremony, which celebrates outstanding achievements in river restoration and catchment management, Tweed Forum staff Luke Comins and Hamish Robertson and Tweed Forum Trustee Prof. Chris Spray, alongside colleagues from CBEC Eco-Engineering and JBA Consulting,

accepted the award on behalf of all project partners. The Gold Standard Award was made in recognition of the Eddleston Water Project's long-standing (14 years) monitoring and evaluation programme, and the influence it's had in sharing the benefits of natural flood management techniques throughout the UK and beyond.

See page 20 for the latest news from the Eddleston Water Project.

Staff update



Jane Gibson has joined the Tweed Forum team, taking up the role of Project Officer with a special focus on delivering new riparian woodland as part of the Riverwoods Blueprint project. Jane has a strong background in woodland creation, having previously worked with Scottish Forestry and the Argyll & The Isles Coast & Countryside Trust, and is looking forward to working with land managers and communities.

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Tweed Forum River Champion



Ghillie Phil Ellis (left), who manages the Tweedswood beat under the iconic Leaderfoot Viaduct in the Scottish Borders, is presented with the 2024 Tweed Forum River Champion Award from Tweed Forum CEO, Luke Comins (right) in recognition of Phil's extensive efforts to improve the river environment and create habitat to support biodiversity and aid the declining Atlantic salmon population. The award recognises individuals with an outstanding commitment to the protection and enhancement of the natural, built and cultural heritage of the Tweed catchment.

Completion of restoration works at one of the most striking landmarks in the Scottish Borders - the William Wallace statue at Bemersyde



Tweed Forum is coordinating this important Fund on behalf of Roxburghe Estates, Federated Hermes and EDF Renewables

Fallago Environment Fund

Tweed Forum coordinates this important natural, built and cultural heritage Fund on behalf of Roxburghe Estates, Federated Hermes and EDF Renewables. To date, the main Fund has supported a total of 175 projects, amounting to over £2 million, with some of the recent highlights featured here.



His Grace, the Duke of Roxburghe, celebrating Fallago Environment Fund's £2 million milestone



The Duke and Duchess of Roxburghe pictured with some participants at a Borders Youth Theatre workshop in Selkirk as they announce a £10,250 grant for the organisation

This long-term strategy, working in partnership with the Environment Agency and Natural England, aims to improve the River Till SSSI and SAC

River Till

Restoration Strategy

The River Till Restoration Strategy continues to work with farmers, landowners and communities to improve the River Till Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). In autumn 2024, we restored 185 m of riverbank on the Wooler Water on behalf of Northumbrian Water. This work involved the removal of hundreds of tonnes of hard bank protection and replacing it with locally sourced timber root-wads to create a sustainable solution which will be more sensitive to the designated site.

We also launched our new short film, '10 years of Restoring the River Till', in November 2024 (see QR code opposite).

The film celebrates the achievements of the strategic partnership over the past decade and looks ahead to the possibilities over the next 10 years. The film has been a fantastic success and has already reached over 40,000 people. ►



Craig Marshall (Senior Project Officer, Tweed Forum) is pictured during the installation of timber root-wads, a more sustainable solution to stabilising riverbank erosion on the Wooler Water

► We are also continuing to work with Northumbrian Water and the Rivers Trust on the Thriving Catchments project. Designs are being drawn up to restore over 30 ha of the Pallin's Burn catchment which will deliver benefits including improved water quality and enhanced biodiversity.

Elsewhere on the catchment we are working with an estate on the River Breamish to restore floodplain connectivity across approximately 60 ha of the valley floor. Once delivered, this project will improve floodplain and riparian habitats, enhance climate resilience and deliver a range of ecosystem services.

Take a look at our short film tweedforum.org/news/celebrating-10-years-of-restoring-the-river-till/ or use the QR code opposite.



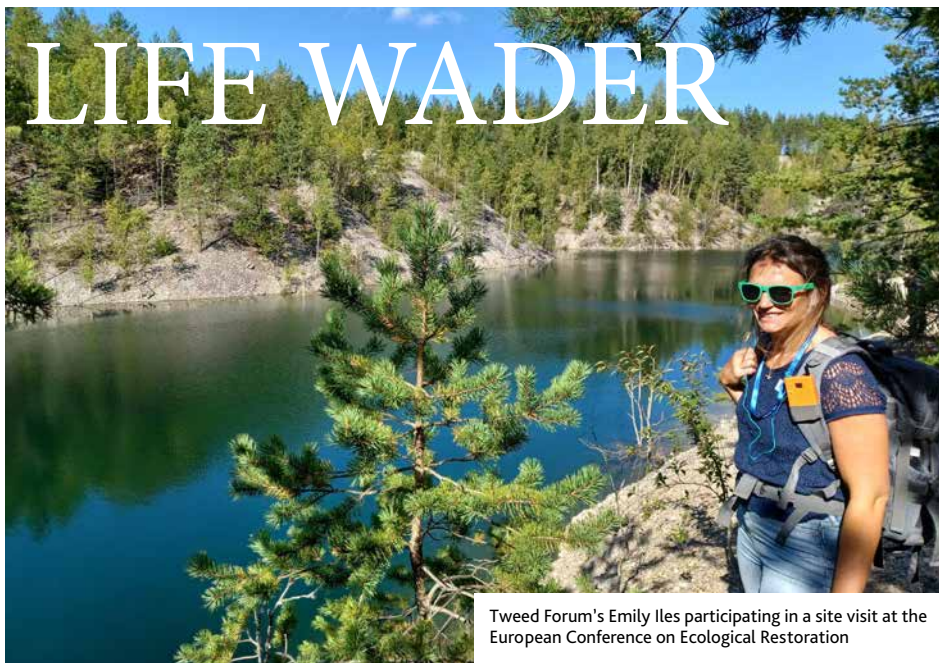
Installation of timber root-wads



Bank stabilisation after the installation of timber root-wads on the Wooler Water

□ HABITATS & SPECIES

Delivering improvements for river, intertidal and marine habitats within the Tweed catchment and along the Northumberland Coast over a five year period



Tweed Forum's Emily Iles participating in a site visit at the European Conference on Ecological Restoration

The EU LIFE WADER initiative has been making great progress and the three LIFE WADER projects based at Tweed Forum - Riparian Woodlands for Diffuse Pollution, Tackling Invasive Non-Native Species, and the Tweed Story education project – are all delivering key elements of the overall programme. We are also working with the Environment Agency to develop ambitious restoration proposals for a historically straightened 2 km stretch of the River Breamish on the Harehope Estate.

The aim of LIFE WADER is to deliver improvements for river, intertidal and marine habitats in four key Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and two Special Protection Areas (SPAs) along

the Northumberland Coast, and within the River Tweed catchment, by tackling local issues under four main themes: improving water quality, controlling macro algae, tackling invasive non-native species and protecting wildlife from recreational pressure. LIFE WADER is led by Natural England, in partnership with the Environment Agency, Newcastle University and Tweed Forum.

Tweed Forum staff Hamish Robertson and Emily Iles attended the European Conference on Ecological Restoration (SERE) in Tartu, Estonia, in summer 2024 thanks to support from LIFE WADER. This event provided an excellent platform to share insights from two LIFE WADER projects: Riparian Woodlands for Diffuse Pollution and Tackling Invasive



► **Non-Native Species.** Tweed Forum's recent biological control trials targeting Himalayan balsam and strategies for the long-term, catchment-wide management of invasive non-native species featured at the conference, as did our approach to improving water quality through targeted riparian tree planting. Emily and Hamish also enjoyed the opportunity to learn from other experts in their fields.

The Riparian Woodlands for Diffuse Pollution project is now close to achieving its 64 ha riparian woodland creation target, with the aim of reducing the impact of diffuse pollution and improving water quality within the River Tweed SAC. Restoration works on the River Breamish are due to take place in early summer 2025 and will deliver a series of flood embankment breaches and over 1 km of new meandering

Riparian woodland plays a crucial role in maintaining healthy, biodiverse ecosystems

channel, which will reconnect the river to its floodplain. Large woody material will be installed in the existing channel to encourage water into the new channel and out onto the floodplain, and new scrapes will be excavated in the floodplain creating areas of diverse new wetland habitat.

Read more here:

tweedforum.org/life-wader/



LIFE WADER (LIFE20 NAT/UK/000277) is financially supported by LIFE, a financial instrument of the European Commission

Our long-term control of invasive non-native plant species across the Tweed catchment continues

Tweed Invasives Project

Our long-term control programme for giant hogweed and Japanese knotweed continues to benefit from identifying key infestation hotspots and targeting these areas early. This ensures any plants which are discovered are still small in size, which reduces chemical use and improves safety for contractors. Challenging weather conditions have

Despite these difficulties, the control team successfully treated all target areas, removing 10,503 giant hogweed plants from the catchment. Rope access contractors also assisted the team by removing plants growing on steep banks (see below). Control of American skunk cabbage within the catchment remains effective, and the remaining



Giant hogweed can occasionally grow in inaccessible locations and abseilers from specialists SAS Rope & Rail helped out last year in some hard-to-reach places!

been an emerging issue, with May 2024 the warmest on record and frequent showers accelerating plant growth. With the rest of the summer remaining cool and wet, this also periodically limited our ability to carry out control work.

Japanese knotweed infestations along the Tweed are now smaller and more fragmented thanks to our targeted control programme. Our ongoing trial of a rust fungus biological control to inhibit Himalayan balsam is making good



Volunteers from Berwickshire Coastal Partnership concluding a day of Himalayan balsam "bashing" with Tweed Forum's Emily Iles (front right) at Coldingham Bay.

► progress. Infection of Himalayan balsam seedlings with the rust fungus was confirmed at all test sites and good levels of mature leaf infection was also achieved, which is encouraging.

Our dedicated team of volunteers contributed an amazing 334 hours towards the project in the last year. Volunteers play a crucial role in assisting with tasks such as controlling and monitoring invasive species and reporting sightings of invasive non-native species (INNS). One of our volunteers is also working to achieve Bronze AQUA biosecurity accreditation. AQUA biosecurity is a free regional pilot scheme run by the Bristol Zoological Society with the aim of working with individual sites, which are open to anglers and other waterway users, to help them increase their biosecurity measures and combat the threat of INNS.

Finally, ongoing botanical surveys (which we carry out at various sites throughout the Tweed catchment) are continuing to demonstrate that areas which were once heavily infested with INNS are steadily recovering; that native vegetation will recolonise and flourish where INNS have been removed/controlled. It's amazing to see nature recovering throughout the Tweed catchment thanks to the collective efforts of the Tweed Invasives Project control team and volunteers, and we thank everyone who works so hard to achieve these fantastic results.

Please keep reporting sightings to us at info@tweedforum.org. Please include a photo and a grid reference, if possible.

Tweed Forum is carrying out peatland restoration in the Scottish Borders in collaboration with NatureScot's 'Peatland ACTION' programme

Peatland ACTION



In restored peatland areas, the return of natural vegetation such as cloudberry, carnivorous sundew (centre foreground) and sphagnum moss help to ensure rich carbon stores are retained in the soil

Peatland ACTION funding was very competitive last year but Tweed Forum managed to secure support to deliver Phase 5 of peatland restoration works at Wemyss & March Estate.

The restoration undertaken on the estate included a mixture of hag-reprofiling, drain blocking and bunding in gullies. A Phase 6 restoration plan is currently in development and we hope to make use of drone surveys in this phase of the project to help improve the accuracy of

site mapping for project delivery.

The Friends of Leadburn Community Woodland were unfortunately unsuccessful in securing Peatland ACTION funding for Phase 2 of their peatland restoration project during the 2024/25 funding round. Undeterred, the group were keen to proceed with the project as planned and were able to fund the work themselves. Restoration works to "stump flip" and "ground smooth" the 12 ha of previously afforested



□ HABITATS & SPECIES



NatureScot Chairman and senior management team (pictured) on a site visit to view peatland restoration works at Leadburn, hosted by Friends of Leadburn Community Woodland and Tweed Forum Peatland ACTION staff

► bog at the site were completed in October 2024. The contractors also installed a series of surface bunds around the periphery of the site to further retain water. Roxburghe Estates were very pleased with the restoration work completed at Score

Head in 2024 and are looking to continue to restore areas of degraded blanket bog across the wider estate. Scoping is currently ongoing to inform a restoration plan for these areas with the hope of funding a new project this coming year.



This winter, specialist contractors undertook hag reprofiling and peat bunding works at Wemyss & March Estate; the bunding work (pictured) will slow the flow of water through the peatland and create important bog pool habitat which will benefit a variety of wildlife

This scheme offers funding for small-scale tree planting throughout the Scottish Borders

Borders Tree Grant Scheme

The Borders Tree Grant Scheme (delivered in partnership with Borders Forest Trust) was launched in July 2024 with the aim of encouraging farmers, landowners and non-profit organisations, such as schools and charities, to plant native landscape trees across the Scottish Borders. The grant helps support the planting of parkland

trees, hedgerow trees, small copses, riverside (riparian) trees and orchards.

This first year of the scheme proved very popular – we received 59 applications, resulting in the planting of 9,789 individual landscape trees throughout the scheme area. The grant amount is limited to £1,000 per applicant/organisation per year.





(Above) Derek Robeson, Tweed Forum, and Hannah Cockett, Borders Forest Trust, marking the launch of the new Borders Tree Grant Scheme; (opposite) a local community group planting a small copse at Ashkirk thanks to support from the scheme



**BORDERS TREE
GRANT SCHEME**

[tweedforum.org/our-work/projects/
borders-tree-grant-scheme/](https://tweedforum.org/our-work/projects/borders-tree-grant-scheme/)

Creating a network of riparian woodland and healthy river systems throughout the Scottish Borders, and beyond...

Riparian Woodland Creation

Strategic native woodland creation along riparian (river) corridors has been an important part of Tweed Forum's work for over 20 years. We know that increased native riparian woodland improves the resilience of ecosystems, and local communities and businesses, in the face of the twin climate and biodiversity crises and we continue our commitment to expanding this vital habitat throughout the Tweed catchment.

During the 2024/2025 tree planting season we have been involved in delivering 68 ha of riparian woodland across the catchment, including in the upper Tweed, Biggar Water, Leader Water and Leet Water sub-catchments. These woodlands are all designed and located to deliver our strategic goals of reducing diffuse pollution and soil loss, increasing native habitat cover and connectivity, providing shade for water courses and capturing atmospheric carbon. Whilst these benefits are key in targeting and designing our woodland projects, we also aim to create projects which ▶



Woodland creation at Kennetsideheads near Kelso has seen over 30 ha of new native riparian woodland (42,000 trees) planted throughout the farm holding (marked in red); this ambitious woodland creation offers fundamental benefits for biodiversity and water quality, not least because this habitat type is very scarce within the Merse (a significant area of low-lying fertile agricultural land in the southeastern Scottish Borders)

□ HABITATS & SPECIES

► complement and enhance the landowner's business interests.

Our native woodland projects are made feasible via a blended funding model, with the aim of delivering native woodlands at as small a cost as possible to the landowner. Core funding for our projects comes from a variety of sources and, where appropriate, we also support the landowner to take advantage of carbon sequestration opportunities, providing them with a long-term carbon asset for business offsetting or income generation via carbon sales.

The Riverwoods Blueprint Project, led by the Scottish Wildlife Trust, also got underway in 2025. The Blueprint Project aims to deliver at least 100 ha of targeted native riparian woodland creation over the next 3 years. This woodland creation will be delivered by the three Blueprint Project demonstration area partners: Tweed Forum, the Kyle of Sutherland Rivers Trust and the Spey Catchment Initiative. We have already delivered 31 ha of this target within the Tweed catchment this season, with the help of top-up funding from the Blueprint Project.

Alongside engaging with the national river restoration community via the Blueprint Project, we continue to deliver knowledge-sharing, professional advice and policy feedback across various areas. With an ever-growing river restoration movement in Scotland, the need for effective



Increased native riparian woodland improves the resilience of ecosystems, and local communities and businesses, in the face of the twin climate and biodiversity crises

knowledge-sharing, training and standardisation of methods/procedures is clear. In the past year, Tweed Forum has contributed to multi-catchment focus groups, aided in delivery document and contract standardisation, assisted policy steering groups and supported organisations in identifying blended finance opportunities. We know sharing and engaging with other practitioners is an important element in facilitating successful nature recovery programmes across the UK and we are proud to be playing our part.



An innovative and ambitious initiative exploring the development of responsible investment in natural capital

Wild Heart Expansion Project

The Wild Heart Expansion Project aims to explore ways of leveraging in private finance to help tackle the twin climate and biodiversity crises. The funding model is primarily based on the sale of carbon credits to significantly expand native woodland cover, specifically in the South of Scotland, and is inspired by Borders Forest Trust's successful Wild Heart restoration initiative on their landholdings. A scoping assessment has shown potential for the creation

of a further 15,000 ha of new native woodland across the wider area, sequestering around 2 million tonnes of carbon. This could deliver multiple additional benefits from increased biodiversity to flood risk reduction, improved water quality, enhanced salmon stocks in our rivers and community enhancement.

Following a scoping study, the project progressed to a design phase last year (funded by South



□ HABITATS & SPECIES

► of Scotland Enterprise). This involved engaging with a number of willing landowners to scope and create well designed, integrated woodlands in the right places, using a blend of Forestry Grant Scheme (FGS) and ethical investment from responsible sources. A number of estates underwent opportunity mapping and financial modelling showing the potential for a low risk, guaranteed income model through the sale of carbon.

Our most recent phase (funded by the Nature Restoration Fund) has been working with two of the keener estates to map the woodland opportunities in greater detail, carrying out ground truthing and creating a financial offer for landowner consideration. If this proves successful, we can then proceed to detailed design, which will go through the usual planning processes. Possible community benefits will also be explored. The initiative is part of a wider collaboration between NatureScot (www.nature.scot/home/nature-investment-partnership) and environmental economics specialists, Palladium.



Funded by Scottish Government, Interreg and SEPA, this project aims to restore natural habitats and reduce flood risk in Peebles and Eddleston village

Eddleston Water Project

The Eddleston Water Project is the first of only two UNESCO Ecohydrology Demonstration Sites in the UK and is helping shape policy discussions on flood risk management and biodiversity recovery both nationally and internationally. This winter we installed another 19 log jams and lateral flow deflectors on the Middle Burn, as well as a substantial run-off attenuation feature. These new log jams are more robust than the originals they replace (dating from 2013) and should have a much longer lifespan. This work was carried out in collaboration with site-owners Forestry and Land Scotland who helped to coordinate the works. These log structures may not look very impressive, but they have played an integral part in delaying flood peaks and giving people more time to prepare for the impact of flooding. We have also

completed two more ponds bringing the total to 41.

In November 2024, 12 years on from the completion of restoration works at Lakewood, it was time to remove the last of the tree tubes from the site and a group of Wildlife and Countryside Management students from Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) were only too happy to lend a hand. Plastic tree tubes are one of the most economical ways to establish native woodlands at scale and, despite trying to avoid their use, they are often a necessary evil in avoiding herbivore damage in a sapling's first few years of life. The tubes themselves can be reused or recycled, although doing so can be a laborious task. Big thanks to all the students who helped on the day and to everyone else who takes the time to remove plastic from their tree planting sites.



An aerial view of the Middle Burn in the Eddleston Water catchment, host to a number of log jams/lateral flow deflectors which play an integral part in delaying flood peaks and giving people more time to prepare for the impact of flooding

□ FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE



One of the newly installed log jams on the Middle Burn, a tributary of the Eddleston Water



Students from SRUC's Wildlife and Countryside Management course helped to remove redundant plastic tree tubes from the Eddleston Water Project's Lakewood site

Exploring how new sources of finance could accelerate delivery of natural flood management across the Eddleston Water catchment

Investing in Nature in the Eddleston Water Catchment

Our FIRNS (The Facility for Investment Ready Nature in Scotland) project, to explore how new sources of finance might help increase delivery of natural flood management (NFM) across the Eddleston Water catchment for the benefit of communities and wildlife, is now concluding. Key conclusions from the 18 month study include the importance of detailed hydrological information in accurately assessing the impact of different potential combinations of NFM measures on downstream flood risk, as well as recognising that the scale of intervention required might be extremely challenging, i.e., in some catchments achieving land management changes at the required scale might be unrealistic. The study also highlighted that varying costs of NFM interventions could impact the ultimate viability of any NFM-hosting contracts with land managers.

It was also concluded that a key step in developing any NFM market would be the identification of revenue streams that can underpin the activities proposed. The project was able to assess damages from flooding that could be avoided through

different combinations of NFM measures upstream, but financial modelling showed that grants or non-repayable capital would likely be required to cover some or all costs of implementation of NFM, i.e., that private finance alone would not be sufficient. Looking beyond flood risk reduction to the financial value of wider ecosystem services benefits, the study found that these may be at least four times more than the flood benefits identified.

The study also found that meaningful revenues from private sources are unlikely unless flooding is seen to be threatening the resilience of large businesses/highly populated areas located within flood-prone areas. It also showed that investors had limited interest in NFM projects, due to insufficient scale and financial returns. Landowner engagement ►

This project is supported by The Facility for Investment Ready Nature in Scotland (FIRNS). Delivered by NatureScot in collaboration with The Scottish Government and in partnership with the National Lottery Heritage Fund.





NFM measures to "slow the flow" of water include re-meandering and flood storage ponds (bottom right of image)

► revealed a mixed level of interest in participating in NFM. This "patchwork" of interest poses a challenge for the effectiveness of NFM and investor confidence. Farmers need details on payment rates and the new Agriculture Bill in order to make an informed decision, neither of which are clear just now.

In summary, the project has demonstrated the significant potential of NFM for flood risk reduction but highlighted substantial challenges

in securing private finance for its widespread implementation in a rural context. Key barriers include the high costs, limited private sector revenue potential due to the nature of the beneficiaries, mixed attitudes from land managers, and the need for aggregated, investable projects. The findings suggest that a blended finance approach involving public and private investment, along with a well-defined governance structure, may be necessary to advance NFM at a meaningful scale.



An aerial view of the Adie's Brae dig near Moffat, part of the Uncovering the Tweed archaeology project

Destination Tweed

Destination Tweed is a unique river revitalisation partnership initiative led by Tweed Forum that will enhance, celebrate and share the nature, history and stories of the River Tweed. The initiative will deliver significant economic, environmental and social benefits to South Scotland and North Northumberland through a wide range of actions and activities delivered across 13 individual projects.

The Destination Tweed initiative is in full swing with three projects - Designed Landscapes (Tweed Forum), Woodlands for Wildlife and Water (Tweed Forum) and Revitalising the Wild Heart of Southern Scotland (Borders Forest Trust) - planting over 65,000 native and riparian trees to date, creating new woodland, restoring amenity parkland and increasing vital rural skills. Another habitat creation project - Pollinators Along the Tweed (Buglife Scotland) - worked with volunteers and community groups to enhance almost 3.2 ha over 11 different sites including The Old Melrose Estate, Alexandra Park in Walkerburn and Kingsway in Peebles.

Destination Tweed also supports the Tweed Invasives Project, led by Tweed Forum, which focuses on controlling five invasive non-native plant species throughout the Tweed catchment (see page 10). Additionally, our education project TweedWATCH continues to use the river environment to engage with schools and young people and you can read more about this on page 28.

The Biggar Water Restoration Project hosted several events in 2024

to engage and consult with a range of stakeholders regarding the concepts and proposed designs for the remeandering of the watercourse at the two sites being restored. With feedback gathered,



Tweed Forum's Hamish Robertson is helping deliver the Woodlands for Wildlife and Water project

we look forward to delivery in summer 2025. The team at the Connecting Threads project (Southern Uplands Partnership) supported over 65 creative practitioners to explore cultural and place-making opportunities. Their new website, tweedriverculture.org, ►

□ DESTINATION TWEED UPDATE



Women's mountain biking group, The FNY Collective, celebrates a £10,000 award from Destination Tweed's community grant scheme to help fund the creation of cycling routes and events along the River Tweed that highlight inspirational women in history

► showcases creative work inspired by the river and delivered as part of this project.

Over 550 individuals participated in a mix of activities as part of the Uncovering the Tweed archaeology project including excavation, LiDAR mapping, geophysical surveys, and online workshops. Excavations at Adie's Brae near Moffat were a highlight of this work with post-excavation analysis underway. The Community Grants Scheme offers funding for small-scale community projects and has supported a variety of projects from cultural events and community gardening plans to new heritage trails and women's mountain biking initiatives.

Destination Tweed is also involved

with projects which will boost the local visitor economy. At the Crook Inn site in Tweedsmuir, a high-quality new-build sustainable bunkhouse will be constructed which will have accommodation for up to 23 visitors. Construction work is due to complete in spring 2026.

At the heart of Destination Tweed is the creation of the River Tweed Trail from Moffat to Berwick-upon-Tweed. Major path and access improvements have already been delivered in partnership with Scottish Borders Council alongside discussions with Dumfries and Galloway Council and Northumberland County Council. In October 2024, we launched the River Tweed Trail brand with a visit from the Deputy First Minister. ►

□ DESTINATION TWEED UPDATE

► The eye-catching 'T' design draws inspiration from the natural beauty found in and along the river and will be easy to spot on waymarking along the route. The River Tweed Trail will launch as a visitor experience in 2028 with new interpretation and a bespoke website.

Destination Tweed has also collaborated with talented filmmaker and animator Amanda Shannon to create a new short film which showcases all 13 amazing projects and their work along the River Tweed. The film featured in the most recent Destination Tweed newsletter and if you'd like to keep up to date with project updates, details of events and activities and much, much more, please use the QR code opposite or go to linktr.ee/destinationtweeduk.

Sign up to the Destination Tweed mailing list and receive your very own copy, straight to your inbox. A short film is also available via the QR code which gives a fantastic introduction to the work of Destination Tweed and how we can all help celebrate and care for the River Tweed.



Deputy First Minister Kate Forbes helps launch the River Tweed Trail brand which draws inspiration from the natural beauty found in, and along, the river



□ DESTINATION TWEED UPDATE

An environmental education and outreach programme, led by Tweed Forum, to inspire people to care for, and appreciate, their environment

TweedWATCH

Tweed Forum's Education and Outreach Officer, Jenny Holmes, worked with over 3,000 children and adults at event days and school workshops over the past year as part of the Destination Tweed's TweedWATCH. TweedWATCH workshops offer children and young people the opportunity to gain knowledge about the river, boost health and wellbeing through time spent in nature and contribute to actions to combat climate change.

One highlight was collaborating with the Tweed Foundation to welcome two Primary 6 classes from Edenside Primary School who enjoyed several sessions exploring the River Tweed's wildlife at the Cobby. The classes learned about riverbank trees, plants, land invertebrates and birds (and spotted a kingfisher!). Together they studied the Cobby's history, examined threats like pollution and invasive non-native species, practiced field drawing and made hapazomes (a Japanese printmaking technique that uses the natural pigments of leaves and flowers to create vibrant prints on fabric or paper). Time spent learning outdoors had a positive effect on the children with one student commenting how calm they felt walking along the river and spotting wildlife.

TweedWATCH is currently developing an education pack for primary school teachers to support and encourage



Primary 6 pupils from Edenside Primary School enjoying a joint TweedWATCH-Tweed Foundation workshop on the banks of the River Tweed

them to engage with local green and blue spaces. This includes improving their school grounds and taking children off-site to discover local river, coastal or woodland areas. The pack covers a variety of environmental topics which have been tested with school groups involved in the project, and are now being compiled into a resource for teachers. The education pack will launch later this year as both a print and digital resource which will include curriculum-linked lesson plans and supporting materials.

Spreading the word –

a national role in promoting Natural Flood Management

Over the past year, we have connected with more than 556 individuals across 35 distinct events, sharing our insights and experiences in implementing natural flood management throughout the Eddleston Water catchment.

As well as knowledge-sharing at conferences, meetings and other events, we have also welcomed a wide range of visitors to our Eddleston Water Project demonstration sites. Ranging from

fellow environmental professionals to students to government officials, both from within the UK and further afield, we have hosted several national Science Advisers as well as colleagues from NatureScot, the Scottish Government's Agriculture team, several environmental NGOs, West Lothian Council, National Taipei University, the Environment Bank, and over 120 higher education students.



Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust (ACT) visiting natural flood management demonstration sites in the Eddleston catchment



Our ever-popular catchment model has been redesigned and updated, and made its first appearance at the 2025 Border Union Agricultural Society's (BUAS) Schools Countryside Day (pictured). The model, which recreates two river catchments in miniature – one catchment featuring various natural flood management (NFM) measures in a restored landscape and another reflecting a more typical modern rural landscape – provides a hands-on demonstration of the benefits of NFM as “rain” is introduced into the catchment via a number of water nozzles connected to a small pump. The resulting flow of water through the river channel and across the wider landscape can be easily seen and, more importantly, the volume of water being retained by the two catchments can be measured, showing very clearly

that the catchment with various NFM measures retains far more water than its counterpart, thus “slowing the flow” of floodwaters.

The newly redesigned model now includes audio cues such as voiceovers, weather sounds and running water as well as light-up features. The light-up features reflect water temperature: the restored catchment shows a blue river, indicating cooler temperatures associated with shaded, healthy watercourses, while the unrestored catchment shows a red river, representing higher temperatures due to the lack of bankside tree cover and vegetation. The new design will be put to the test as we take it on the road over the next year, demonstrating NFM in an engaging way to a range of audiences as a key element of Tweed Forum's outreach programme.

Tweed Forum Funding

Due to the complexity and number of project funders we are unable to list all the contributing bodies in the relevant sections of the newsletter. However, the following have contributed to Tweed Forum, and associated projects, over the last year:

- Agri-Environment Climate Scheme
- RPID Forestry Cooperation Fund
- Catchment Partnership Action Fund
- Clark Woodlands Trust
- Defra
- Donations from individuals
- Dundee University
- EDF Renewables
- Environment Agency
- EU LIFE WADER
- Fishmongers' Company's Charitable Trust
- Forest Carbon
- Great Northumberland Forest
- Federated Hermes
- National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Natural England
- Nature Restoration Fund
- NatureScot
- Northumberland National Park Authority
- Northumbrian Water Limited
- Old Melrose Estate
- River Tweed Commission
- Roxburghe Estates
- Scottish Borders Council
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency
- Scottish Forestry
- Scottish Wildlife Trust
- Shared Prosperity Fund
- South of Scotland Enterprise
- Sustrans
- The Jim Clark Memorial Motor Club
- The Scottish Government
- The Rivers Trust
- The Water Environment Fund
- The Woodland Trust
- Tweed Foundation
- Tyne Rivers Trust

and a large number of farmers and landowners

Tweed Forum Trustees and Staff

TWEED FORUM TRUSTEES

Tweed Forum is guided and supported by a board of trustees who give their time, knowledge and experience freely, and we are extremely grateful for their input.

Debbie Playfair (Chair)

Adrian Dolby

Andrew Wallace

Catherine Maxwell-Stuart

Prof. Chris Spray

Kevin Stewart

Patricia Glennie

Paul Jardine

Robert Hunter

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Key achievements to date

1,589,466

trees planted
(1248 ha)



72,243

people engaged
in over 1,809 events



5437 ha

of peatland improved



276

ponds & wetlands
created/restored



260

engineered log jam
structures installed



444 ha

of floodplain
& wetland restored



300 miles

of river enhanced



218 miles

stock exclusion fencing



20+

listed buildings
& monuments restored



1200 miles

of paths upgraded/created



**TWEED
FORUM**

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AT THE HEART OF LAND & WATER MANAGEMENT ON TWEED